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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: USG IPR TRAINING INCREASING LOCAL SKILLS

¶1. Summary: IPR violations are a major problem in Nigeria and Mission Nigeria is working closely with the Nigerian Government (GON) to improve the skills and effectiveness of several key agencies. In the past 12 months more than 40 GON officials have participated in various United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) Global Intellectual Academy (GIPA) training programs. The programs have focused on copyright, enforcement of intellectual property, patents, and trademarks. The participants have praised the quality of the programs, thanked the USG for additional skills acquired, and subsequently returned to Nigeria afterwards. Mission Nigeria will continue this robust engagement with two programs planned for in-country training slated for June 24-26 and August 18-19. We have not yet seen tangible results decreasing piracy; however, based on these capacity building programs, over the next year we expect that enforcement actions and prosecutions will increase - leading to less piracy. End Summary.

¶2. Mission Nigeria has built strong relationships with GON agencies responsible for IP over the past year. These agencies have expressed need for capacity building and through the support provided by the USPTO and its GIPA programs the USG has trained a cadre of highly competent and senior GON officials. Since 2005 GON agencies, such as the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC), Patent, Trademark and Design Registry of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI), Nigerian Police, Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP), and the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice have participated in programs focused on trademark administration, copyright administration, border enforcement of intellectual property rights, implementation of the Madrid Protocol on IP, trademark examination, patent industrial design, enforcement of IP, copyright in the digital environment, advanced patent law, and advanced trademark law.

¶3. The training programs have comprised classroom teaching, group discussions and study tours at GIPA. Participants were exposed to various aspects of IP protection in the U.S., held discussions with U.S. industry during the programs, and were exposed to current global issues on IP protection via discussions with participants from other countries.

GIPA Training Programs A Big Success

¶4. In briefings following attendance at GIPA, all participants have told us that the quality of teaching was excellent and the study tours very useful for better understanding how procedures are implemented in the U.S. Participants specifically mentioned the practical hands-on experience afforded them during the training programs which has improved their skills and competence in performing their own duties.

¶5. Participants also mentioned that the training not only improved their knowledge of IP protection, but instilled an eagerness to apply these new skills in their current jobs. Participants from the Nigerian Patent, Trademark and Design Registry specifically commended the opportunity to participate in a tribunal proceeding and having a practical experience in non-judicial adjudication of patents and trademarks. This was timely because the Nigerian Patent, Trademark and Design Registry was in th